

# the Journey of Discipleship

## Lesson 8: Kingdom Gifts

### INTRODUCTION:

Through this study, you have learned that, as a follower of Jesus, you now belong to a kingdom community and have been called to participate in God's kingdom mission to make disciples of all nations. In this final study, you will learn about spiritual gifts – what they are, how they work in the church, and what purpose they fulfill. You will also consider what your spiritual gifts are and how they could be used to serve the church and to bless the nations.

1. *Share about a positive team experience that you had in the past. What contributed to you all working well as a team?*
  
2. *Now share about a negative experience you had as part of a team, perhaps when you felt underappreciated or inferior to or rejected by other members of the group?*

1 Corinthians was a letter written by Paul to address issues going on in the Corinthian church – issues that are still relevant to the church today. Word had come to Paul that the Corinthian church was plagued with divisions and spiritual immaturity. In the passage below, Paul was addressing the issue of spiritual gifts because there were people in the church who felt their gifts were superior to others, were using their gifts in a domineering manner, and causing others to feel that their gifts are inferior and unimportant.

### READ 1 CORINTHIANS 12:12-31, 13:13

<sup>12</sup>Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ. <sup>13</sup>For we were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body—whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink. <sup>14</sup>Even so the body is not made up of one part but of many.

<sup>15</sup>Now if the foot should say, “Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,” it would not for that reason stop being part of the body. <sup>16</sup>And if the ear should say, “Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body,” it would not for that reason stop being part of the body. <sup>17</sup>If the whole body were an eye, where would the sense of hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of smell be? <sup>18</sup>But in fact God has placed the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. <sup>19</sup>If they were all one part, where would the body be? <sup>20</sup>As it is, there are many parts, but one body.

<sup>21</sup> The eye cannot say to the hand, “I don’t need you!” And the head cannot say to the feet, “I don’t need you!” <sup>22</sup> On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, <sup>23</sup> and the parts that we think are less honorable we treat with special honor. And the parts that are unpresentable are treated with special modesty, <sup>24</sup> while our presentable parts need no special treatment. But God has put the body together, giving greater honor to the parts that lacked it, <sup>25</sup> so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. <sup>26</sup> If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it.

<sup>27</sup> Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it. <sup>28</sup> And God has placed in the church first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, of helping, of guidance, and of different kinds of tongues. <sup>29</sup> Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? <sup>30</sup> Do all have gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret? <sup>31</sup> Now eagerly desire the greater gifts. And now I will show you the most excellent way ...

<sup>13</sup> And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.

3. *How is the church like a body, according to Paul?*

4. *Who or what unifies all the different people or parts of the church body, according to vs. 12-13, 18, and 24b?*

5. *What does verses 14-20 reveal about how some members of congregation (who were wanting to leave) were thinking and feeling? How does Paul correct their thinking?*

6. In verses 21-26, Paul addresses the other group. What does vs. 21 reveal about how this group was thinking and feeling? How does Paul correct this group's attitude and thoughts?
7. List the different types of gifts that are mentioned in 1 Cor 12:27-30 and Ephesians 4:11-13. What do you learn about the purpose of spiritual gifts from this?

### GOING DEEPER

As the human body must have diversity to work effectively as a whole, so the members of Christ's body have diverse gifts, the use of which can help bring about the accomplishment of Christ's united purpose. Each must properly exercise his gifts or effectively use his position for the good of the whole.

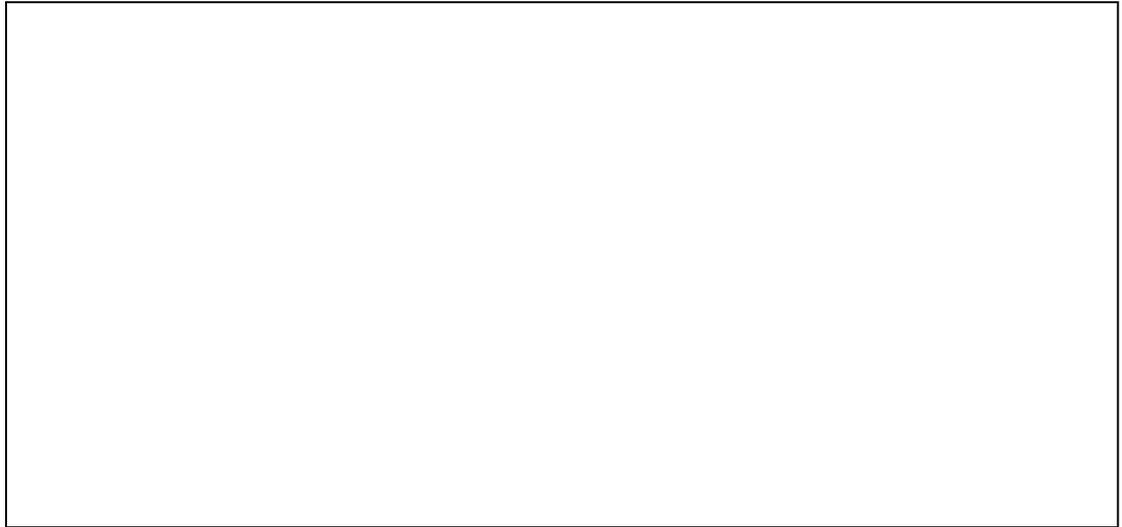
8. Where do you feel you are on the scale below?

1	2	3	4	5
I don't know what my gifts are and am not serving or ministering to others	I have a little under- standing of my gifts and have dabbled a little in ministering to others	I have some under- standing of my gifts and am just starting to use it regularly to serve others	I have a good awareness and understanding of my gifts and have seen some fruit both past and present from utilizing it	I have very good insight about my gifts, learned how to use them through practice, and am training others or making disciples through it

1 Corinthians 12:4-5 says, "There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working, but the same God works all of them in all men." Some Bible scholars believe that this helps us understand that spiritual gifts can fall into three categories

- Gifts – which can be interpreted more as God-given natural strengths, passions, talents, and abilities (i.e., encouraging others, connecting easily with others, hospitality, leadership, mercy, singing, social justice, etc.)
- Services – which can be interpreted as callings into areas of ministry or church positions (i.e., children's ministry, worship team, teacher, pastor, apostle, etc.)
- Working – which can be interpreted as more of the supernatural workings or gifts of the Holy Spirit for a particular situation (i.e., speaking in tongues, miracles, healing, discerning spirits, etc.)

For our purposes today, let's just focus on the first type of gifts (your God-given strengths and abilities). Brainstorm here on what gifts you have of this type? Consider things that you've been praised for in the past or what you can do and keep doing that energizes and excites you.



### LIVING IT OUT

9. *Read 1 Corinthians 12:31 and then 13:13? What may be deducted as the "greater gifts" mentioned by Paul in 12:31? And what is the greatest of these greater gifts? Why?*
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
10. *For a church that was obsessed about spiritual gifts and comparisons, how does this give proper perspective?*

### MOVING FORWARD

11. *What stands out to you most through this study? What is God saying to you through it?*
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
12. *How is He asking you to respond, and what action steps can you take within the next week?*